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1     1.     A conferencing system comprising:  
2     an input configured to receive N encoded speech signals from N terminals; and  
3     a signal processing arrangement configured to determine L encoded signals, of the  
4     N encoded speech signals, each indicative of an amount of sound that is louder than  
5     amounts of sound indicated by signals of the N encoded signals other than the L signals,  
6     the signal processing arrangement being further configured to produce at least N minus L  
7     sets of signals similar to the L signals and to transmit at least a set of the similar signals  
8     toward each of the terminals other than the terminals from which the L signals were  
9     received.

1     2.     The system of claim 1 wherein the signal processing arrangement is  
2     configured to determine the L signals based on amounts of energy in the N signals.

1     3.     The system of claim 2 wherein the signal processing arrangement is  
2     configured to transmit a reduced set of signals toward each of the terminals from which  
3     the L signals are received, the reduced set including the L similar signals minus the  
4     signals similar to the signals received from the terminals toward which the reduced set is  
5     being transmitted.

1     4.     The system of claim 3 wherein the signal processing arrangement is  
2     configured to transmit the signals toward the terminals in an unmixed format.

1     5.     The system of claim 1 wherein the N signals include packets having data  
2     portions and headers, and the signal processing arrangement is configured to alter the

3 headers of the packets to transmit the packets toward appropriate terminals.

1 ~~6.~~ A method comprising:

2 receiving N encoded first telecommunications signals from N terminals;

3 selecting L loudest signals from the N signals;

4 producing second telecommunications signals that are similar to the L signals; and

5 transmitting the second signals toward the terminals other than the terminals from

6 which the L signals were received.

1 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising determining the L signals based  
2 upon amounts of energy in the N signals.

1 8. The method of claim 6 further comprising transmitting, toward each of the  
2 terminals from which the L signals were received, the second signals minus each of the  
3 second signals similar to the signals received from the respective terminals.

1 9. The method of claim 6 wherein the second signals are transmitted toward  
2 the terminals in an unmixed format.

1 10. The method of claim 6 wherein the first signals contain RTP packets  
2 having data portions and headers, the method further comprising altering the headers.

1 11. The method of claim 6 wherein L equals one.

1 ~~12.~~ A conferencing system comprising:

2 an input configured to receive N encoded first speech signals from N terminals;

3 means for selecting L loudest signals from the N signals and producing second  
4 telecommunications signals that are similar to the L signals; and  
5 an output device configured to transmit, toward the terminals, the second signals.

1 13. The system of claim 12 wherein the output device is configured to  
2 transmit the second signals except the second signals, if any, associated with the first  
3 signals received from the respective terminals toward which the second signals are  
4 transmitted.

1 14. The system of claim 12 wherein L equals one.

1 15. The system of claim 12 wherein the output device is configured to  
2 transmit the second signals in an ~~unmixed~~ format toward the terminals.

1 16. A computer program product, residing on a computer-readable medium,  
2 comprising instructions for causing a computer to:  
3 receive N encoded first telecommunications signals from N terminals;  
4 select L loudest signals from the N signals;  
5 produce second telecommunications signals that are similar to the L signals; and  
6 transmit the second signals toward the terminals from which the signals of the N  
7 signals other than the L signals were received.

1 17. The computer program product of claim 16 further comprising instructions  
2 for causing a computer to determine the L signals based upon amounts of energy in the N  
3 signals.

1 18. The computer program product of claim 16 further comprising instructions  
2 for causing a computer to transmit, toward each of the terminals from which the L signals  
3 were received, the second signals minus the second signal similar to the signal received  
4 from the respective terminal.

1 19. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein the instructions for  
2 causing the computer to transmit the second signals are configured to cause the computer  
3 to transmit the second signals toward the terminals in an unmixed format.

1 20. The computer program product of claim 16 wherein the first signals  
2 contain RTP packets having data portions and headers, the computer program product  
3 further comprising instructions for causing a computer to alter the headers.